

VZCZCXRO1149  
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW  
DE RUEHCI #0003 0070938  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 070938Z JAN 09  
FM AMCONSUL KOLKATA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2235  
INFO RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 2732

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000003

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/IHB AND SCA/INS  
STATE FOR STAS AND AIAG (REED-ROWE)  
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS  
STATE PASS TO USAID  
HHS FOR NIH/FIC (GLASS/MAMPILLY/HANDLEY)  
HHS FOR FDA (LUMPKIN/VALDEZ)  
HHS PASS TO OGHA (STEIGER/ABDOO)  
HHS FOR CDC (BLOUNT/COX)  
USDA FOR APHIS (FLEMING/BURLESON)  
USDA FOR FAS (RIKER/BEAN)  
NEW DELHI FOR FAS/APHIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [SENV](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [AMED](#) [KFLU](#) [IN](#) [BG](#)

SUBJECT: NEW CONFIRMED AVIAN INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS IN WEST BENGAL

REF: A. 08 KOLKATA 357

[1](#)B. 08 KOLKATA 354

[1](#)1. (U) On January 2 the Indian Ministry of Agriculture confirmed the presence of H5N1 virus in poultry in two non-contiguous administrative blocks of Darjeeling, a district in northern West Bengal. Avian influenza (AI) was confirmed in Matigara in southern Darjeeling and Tukdah in the northern part of the district. These blocks are located approximately 40 km from one another. The principal secretary with the government of West Bengal's Animal Resources Development Department told post that it has culled 1700 birds in Tukdah and plans to cull 22,000 birds in Matigara by January 7. There have been no registered cases of human infection.

Comment

[1](#)2. (SBU) Since November 2008 there have been three confirmed epicenters in West Bengal (see reftels), in addition to the seventeen in the neighboring Indian state of Assam and seven in the neighboring country of Bangladesh. There is no proven linkage between the outbreaks in this region as of now, although geographically they are concentrated in the transborder areas surrounding the northwestern part of Bangladesh. The size and scale of the current AI outbreak in West Bengal remains limited when compared with the outbreak in 2008 and state government officials are more confident in their abilities to contain the outbreak. The geographic concentration of AI in a swath extending from western Assam across northwestern Bangladesh into northern West Bengal is worth examining.

PAYNE